GET YOUR SHIP TOGETHER

Enhancing d20 Future's Starship Armada

by Rodney Thompson
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This August, Wizards of the Coast releases *d20 Future*, a sourcebook for the *d20 Modern* roleplaying game that opens up the limitless worlds of science fiction to d20 System gamers. The book introduces new backgrounds, feats, advanced classes, and other character options, and adds new game rules for science fiction staples like mutations, cybernetics, dimensional travel, and starship combat. In addition, *d20 Future* contains stat blocks for dozens of starships modeled after vessels common to all forms of science fiction.

The sourcebook also introduces a new concept in starship design: starship class templates. Much like creature templates, starship class templates are sets of changes that players and Gamemasters lay over the top of a standard set of starship stats to affect changes along a certain theme. This makes it easy to convert standard-model starships into something more appropriate for your campaign. Additionally, starship templates allow Gamemasters to create entire fleets of ships along a theme quickly and easily without having to invent entirely new starship stats from scratch.

Each template represents a certain class of starship that falls within a larger, more specific category represented by the base starship stats. The *d20 Future* sourcebook contains two templates, the *Lightning*-class and the *Katana*-class. The five new starship class templates presented below can be applied to any basic starship model to create an original, more specialized spacecraft.

Each of the starship templates below mentions appropriate Progress Levels (PL for short) for both starships and the templates themselves. Most of these are PL 7 (Gravity Age) templates applied to PL 6 (Fusion Age) starships, though one is a PL 8 (Energy Age) template. Progress Levels are explained in more detail in the *d20 Future* sourcebook.

Alcatraz-class Prison Ship

With civilization comes criminals, and in space this holds true more than ever. The *Alcatraz*-class starship is an interstellar penal colony built to hold prisoners for the duration of their sentences. Many governments boast at least one of these ships to deal with their incarceration needs.

Alcatraz-class ships come in varying sizes, depending upon the needs of those commissioning the ship's construction. Some space colonies simply need temporary holding facilities for fewer than 100 prisoners, while thriving homeworlds such as Earth require several superheavy ships in order to handle the large volume of inmates. Most of these prison ships are heavily armored, but usually rely on support ships (such as fighters) for their defense. Instead of adding large weapon compliments, *Alcatraz*-class ships maintain standard weapons loadouts. This way, on the off chance that prisoners seize control of the craft, they can't wreak havoc with a heavily-armed starship.

Alcatraz-class starships operate nearly autonomously. The ship boasts no permanent ship compliment (eliminating the chance for escape aboard a shuttle) and only takes on supplies or replacement crew once every few weeks. Even during these infrequent contacts with the outside galaxy the chances of escape are slim, as the primary concern of the crew is the preservation of the ship's integrity.

Alcatraz-class Template (PL 7)

The *Alcatraz*-class template can be applied to any PL 6 medium-weight or heavier starship. The starship's design specs should be adjusted as follows.

Hit Dice: +5d20 HD.

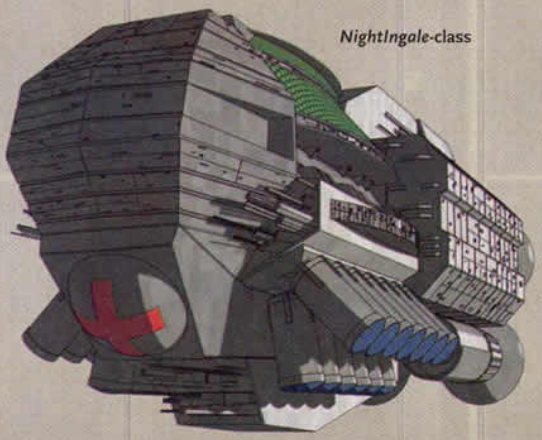
Engine Upgrade: Induction engine, thrusters (tactical speed +1,000 feet).

Defense Systems Upgrade: Light fortification, radiation shielding, repair drones, starship self-destruct.

Sensors Upgrade: Class V sensor array.

Communications Upgrade: Drivesat comm array, mass transceiver.

Grappling System Upgrade: Tractor beam emitter (replaces grapplers).



NightIngale-class

Niven-class Deep Space Explorers

Niven-class starships are designed for the exploration of deep space and delving into the unknown. These ships carry passengers of all types, from scientists to colonists, in the blackness between worlds. Since *Niven*-class starships accommodate such a wide variety of personnel, much care must be given in order to make sure that journeys can be made in safety and comfort. Many *Niven*-class ships possess artificial gardens and can produce their own food for extended periods of time. Though supplies take up large amounts of space on these vessels, some cargo area is usually converted into passenger space in order to prevent cramping.

Niven-class ships serve both as exploration vessels and colony ships. This dual-purpose design makes it easier to explore the unknown. Once explorers find a suitable world, the crew establishes a colony, and the ship remains self-sufficient, eventually moving on to the next location. When designing the ship, engineers ensure that the vessel can travel incredible distances without stopping. Thanks to their upgraded engines, these ships move quickly from one location to another, cataloguing new systems and worlds along the way.

Niven-class ships must be at least mediumweight in order to function properly. They require both cargo space and passenger space capable of supporting entire colonies of passengers in relative comfort for long durations. Few relish the idea of spending months or even years aboard smaller cargo ships, and as such few *Niven*-class ships are ever constructed on that scale.

Niven-class Template (PL 8)

The *Niven*-class template can be applied to any PL 7 mediumweight or larger starship. The starship's design specs should be adjusted as follows.

Engine Upgrade: Gravitic redirection, thrusters (tactical speed +1,500 feet).

Defense Systems Upgrade: Improved autopilot system, radiation shielding, repair drones.

Sensors Upgrade: Class VI sensor array (+2 initiative).

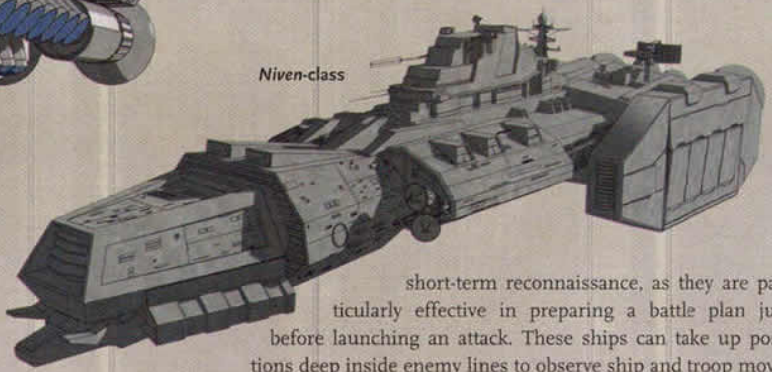
Communications Upgrade: Mass transceiver, drive transceiver.

Grappling System Upgrade: Tractor beam emitter (replaces grapplers).

Other Upgrades: The starship increases its passenger capacity by 50%.

Viper-class Stealth Infiltrators

Viper-class starships are designed to operate deep behind enemy lines. Most *Viper*-class ships are engineered to slip into occupied locations, record sensor data, and then slip out without being noticed. Many military institutions use them for short-term reconnaissance, as they are particularly effective in preparing a battle plan just before launching an attack. These ships can take up positions deep inside enemy lines to observe ship and troop movements. In desperate situations, they broadcast tight-band transmissions back to their base of operations while remaining in place. Manufacturers usually paint *Viper*-class starships matte-black so that they cannot be seen by the naked eye, and each vessel possesses sophisticated sensor blackout technology.



Niven-class

In case of an emergency, the ship can deploy decoy drones to distract pursuit. Few ships of this class possess advanced weaponry, as they are more suited to fleeing than engaging the enemy in head-to-head combat.

Due to the practical needs of a stealth vessel, *Viper*-class ships are only based on ship designs of light and ultralight design. Larger ships are too easy to spot and target with weapons. The correspondingly small crews of such vessels also reduces the number of potential security risks should an infiltrator be captured. Some *Viper*-class ships are equipped with sophisticated pilot-controlled self-destruct mechanisms that can devastate nearby enemy vessels.

Viper-class Template (PL 7)

The *Viper*-class template can be applied to any PL 6 ultralight or light starship. The starship's design specs should be adjusted as follows.

Engine Upgrade: Induction engine, thrusters (tactical speed +1,000 feet).

Defense Systems Upgrade: Decoy Drone Launcher (this is added to any existing defense systems), sensor blackout (see sidebar).

Sensors Upgrade: Class VI sensor array (+2 initiative).

Communications Upgrade: Laser transceiver, mass transceiver.

Grappling System Upgrade: Tractor beam emitter (replaces grapplers).

New Starship Defense Mechanism: Sensor Blackout (PL 7)

An improved version of the stealth screen (see the *d20 FUTURE* sourcebook), the sensor blackout combines the electromagnetic baffling systems of the stealth screen with light-bending gravity technology and mass-altering techniques. While it doesn't completely hide the starship from sight, it does act as a stealth-enhancing device that can prevent a ship from being detected by sensors. The sensor blackout also deflects a ship's own emissions, preventing accidental revelation of the ship's position.

Sensor checks made against a ship with an active sensor blackout are made at a –20 penalty.

A deployed mine has a 75% chance of not detecting the ship.

Finally, a starship with an active sensor blackout gains one-half concealment against all attacks (20% miss chance).

A mine can be equipped with a sensor blackout.

Purchase DC: 12 + one-half the base purchase DC of the starship or mine.

Restriction: Military (+3).

Other Upgrades: 3/4 the passenger capacity of the starship is converted to prison cells, each with containment mechanisms requiring a Disable Device check (DC 30) or an Escape Artist check (DC 40) to escape.

Dagger-class Smuggler Vessels

The *Dagger*-class starship is actually more of an after-market modification to an existing vessel than a true line of starships. Since reputable starship manufacturers cannot claim to produce ships designed to aid in illegal activities, companies market *Dagger*-class vessels by noting that the interior is designed for convenient and private cargo separation. Most *Dagger*-class ships come off the assembly line as the stock model and are later altered in chop shops or smuggling dens. *Dagger*-class ships are popular smuggling vessels and see frequent use in criminal circles and in areas where trade is severely limited.

Dagger-class ships tend to be small enough to avoid attracting attention but large enough to carry a decent amount of cargo; after all, a vessel without enough space to transport contraband would be of little use. Larger vessels are too high profile for most smugglers' tastes. Light and mediumweight starships tend to be the perfect size and are the most common ships to receive *Dagger* classification.

Most *Dagger*-class ships operate independently and must be autonomous. They are usually more than simply transportation; they are homes and hideouts for entire groups of smugglers.

Dagger-class Template (PL 7)

The *Dagger*-class template can be applied to any PL 6 light or mediumweight starship. The starship's design specs should be adjusted as follows.

Engine Upgrade: Induction engine, thrusters (tactical speed +1,000 feet).

Armor Upgrade: Hardness 40 (20 vs. ballistic attacks).

Defense Systems Upgrade: Decoy Drone Launcher, stealth screen (this is added to any existing defense systems).

Sensors Upgrade: Class VI sensor array (+2 initiative).

Communications Upgrade: Laser transceiver, mass transceiver.

Other Upgrades: 1/4 of the ship's cargo space is converted to shielded smuggling compartments. These require a Search check (DC 20) to locate and confer a –5 penalty on any attempts to locate the hidden cargo area with sensors of any kind.

Nightingale-class Infirmary Vessels

As travel between the stars introduced mankind to countless new perils, the need for mobile medical facilities increased rapidly. Space warfare made the convenience of interstellar hospitals a necessity. Instead of transporting the wounded from the battlefield to the hospital, the hospital could come to the wounded. Within the first few months of active service, *Nightingale*-class starships saved thousands of lives that would have been lost due to lengthy travel times.

Nightingale-class ships carry state-of-the-art medical technology and attract more skilled professionals than planet-based hospitals. These ships host research facilities that make it much easier to develop new techniques and medicines. With cutting edge methods and the most advanced machines at their disposal, doctors aboard infirmary vessels are rarely out of options when facing a problem. After all, if there is no ready solution, the researchers aboard a *Nightingale*-class ship simply get to work inventing one.

Unfortunately, success does not come without a cost. In combat zones, enemy fire frequently targets these ships first, crippling a force's ability to heal and refresh its numbers. *Nightingale*-class ships rarely possess the necessary armament to mount a potent defense, and must rely upon support vessels for protection. Some *Nightingale*-class ships are government-sponsored, and thus open for use by citizens, while others are privately owned vessels that frequently deny assistance to those in need unless patients pay exorbitant fees or find a sponsor within the ship's hierarchy.

Nightingale-class Template (PL 7)

The *Nightingale*-class template can be applied to any PL 7 mediumweight or heavier starship. The starship's design specs should be adjusted as follows.

Defense Systems Upgrade: Particle field, radiation shielding, repair drones.

Sensors Upgrade: Class V sensor array.

Communications Upgrade: Drivesat comm array, mass transceiver.

Grappling System Upgrade: Tractor beam emitter (replaces grapplers).

Other Upgrades: The ship has advanced medical facilities onboard, granting a +4 equipment bonus to all Treat Injury checks performed in those facilities. Additionally, at least 1/4 the passenger compliment on the ship is composed of doctors and other medical technicians.

VALOR IS OUR BLOOD!

By Rick LaRue
Illustrations by Jake Parker

LOYAL. BRAVE. HONORABLE. JUST. These words are used across the Flanaess to describe the Knights of Holy Shielding. Less generous individuals might add arrogant, foolish, or even ineffectual to the list. Regardless of their reputation, the truth behind the Knights of Holy Shielding is far more complex than any simple list of words can accurately convey.

An overview of the order's history appears in the *LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer*, and Knights of the Shield have played a role in the setting's development since Greyhawk's earliest days. Although this article is written specifically with the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign in mind, the concept of a vigilant order of knights guarding lands conquered by unthinkable evil has parallels in several fantasy novels and in many DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaigns. With the change of a few proper nouns, this article provides a good framework for a similar order of knights appropriate for any D&D campaign.

Mission

The Knights of Holy Shielding are the quintessential mounted knights of legend. They form the iron backbone of the Shield Lands army, acting as elite heavy cavalry and patrolling the border between outposts and border keeps. Mounted on swift horses and sometimes even more exotic mounts, the knights are able to respond far more rapidly to threats than typical infantry or less experienced cavalry. This places the Order at the forefront of most battles with the enemies of the Shield Lands.

Within the Shield Lands, the knights act as traveling arbiters of law, providing the common folk and lesser nobility swift and evenhanded justice. Sworn to the Shield Lands as a whole and not to one lord or noble house, the knights are able to dispense justice within their homeland with an impartiality sometimes lacking from noble courts. Though binding once given, the judgments of Shield Knights may be appealed to the local noble family. This is extremely rare, as even in the past at the height of the Order's overconfidence and arrogance the knights performed their judicial responsibilities with honor and fairness beyond reproach.

When between missions or not on duty, Shield Knights travel widely in search of adventure and glory. The elder knights of the order have found that well-traveled and experienced knights tend to exhibit greater wisdom and ingenuity when dealing with issues of both war and peace. The returning knights have a greater pool of life experiences to draw from, making them better knights and servants of the Shield Lands.

The primary duty of every Shield Knight has always been the defense of the Shield Lands. Over the years their enemies may have changed, but never has their devotion. In the War of Reclamation to regain land lost to the forces of the evil demigod Iuz during the Greyhawk Wars of the last decade, the Order believes it is their sacred duty to carry the Holy Realm to victory. They feel their failure in the past was a sign of Heironeous's displeasure at the arrogance and pride they foolishly carried in place of honor and humility. To many, the War of Reclamation means not only reclaiming the lost lands, but also reclaiming the lost honor of the Knights of Holy Shielding. The war is not a means of assuaging their wounded pride, but rather a way to regain the favor of Heironeous and the respect of the people they are sworn to protect.

Organization

At the top of the order is the **knight commander**, who is traditionally the earl of Walworth, the province that contains the Shield Lands's capital city, Admundfort. The current knight commander is Countess Katarina Walworth. It is her sworn duty to lead the Order in all matters.

Supporting the knight commander are a number of **knights bannerette**. Knights bannerette are knights who have served the Shield Lands and the Order with distinction and valor and have earned the right to bear their own banners into battle. Knights bannerette have also often gained the lands and titles associated with true nobility and hold as vassals several lesser knights. It is their duty to command battalions of knights, and to advise and report to the knight commander.

The **knight** is the next rank of knighthood within the Order. Often referred to as vassal knights (if they hold their own lands) or as knights-errant (if they do not), they are accorded the honor of being addressed as "Sir" or "Lady."

The newest knights of the Order are often placed under the tutelage of a more experienced knight to whom they report and from whom they receive training. These knights-errant are the most common knights of the Order, and many spend years performing their duties loyally.

Junior knights yet to swear their oaths are called **squires**. They are not officially members of the Order, but most members accord them at least a small level of respect for their current position as all knights were once squires and each still depends on the services they perform as servants, grooms, and assistants.

Particularly promising youths are sometimes taken as **pages** to assist squires in their duties and begin learning what it takes

Lady Katerina

Incosee

to be a knight at a young age. Their duties are usually mundane and onerous, but these lessons in humility serve them well in later years.

The ranks of the Order of the Holy Shield are organized into several units. The smallest unit within the Order is the single **knight** who is attended by his squire and any other retinue he may possess. Next is the **shield**, consisting of six knights and their followers. For larger engagements, four shields form a **lance**. Lances are usually commanded by a senior Shield Knight with many years of experience. Four lances form a **banner**, which can boast the strength of nearly one hundred mounted knights and is commanded by young knights bannerette. Four banners form a **battalion**, the largest formation of Shield Knights. Battalions are commanded by senior knights bannerette and consist of as many as four hundred mounted knights and often three times as many followers and support personnel.

At its height, the Order of the Holy Shield stood at an amazing strength of five battalions. Between the invasions by the Hierarchs of the Horned Society and the Empire of Iuz, the Order suffered heavy losses and currently manages to field only two under-strength battalions. Due to the current extent of the border and the lack of soldiers to adequately defend it, Shield Knights are rarely, if ever, organized into units larger than banners any longer.

As of 593 CY, a garrison of one banner of Shield Knights is stationed at Critwall, Bright Sentry, Torkeep, Gensal, and the South Keep Outpost. Shields or Lances are garrisoned at each of the other major outposts along the border and at Critwall Bridge. The remaining knights are tasked with patrolling the reclaimed lands and defending the recovering villages and manors from raiders, brigands, and deserters. These free-riders often work alone, with companions, or rarely as part of a shield of knights.

Well-Known Knights of Holy Shielding

Holmer Walworth (LG male human Pal9 [Heironeous]/KoHS7) is perhaps the most famous (or infamous) Knight of Holy Shielding. As Earl of Walworth and Knight Commander of the Shield Lands, Lord Holmer served the Shield Lands with distinction and honor for decades. Even when a large portion of the Holy Realm fell to the Horned Society, Lord Holmer managed to hold Critwall against the enemy's advances. In the aftermath, he led the Knights of Holy Shielding and the armies of the Shield Lands in the rapid recovery of the fallen lands in the face of the Hierarchs' retreat.

Sadly, despite his years of valorous service, Lord Holmer is most remembered as the man who doomed the Shield Lands. He had always believed that King Belvor and his Noble Council wished the Shield Lands to fall under Furyondy's control. When Furyondy's emissaries arrived offering aid against the advances of Iuz, Holmer refused their entreaties, believing they were simply a thinly veiled ruse to quietly make the Shield Lands a new Furyondian province. Never one to run from a challenge, Lord Holmer vowed to face Iuz alone and ordered Furyondy's ambassadors evicted from the Shield Lands. The Holy Realm fell soon afterward, and Lord Holmer was dragged off to Dorakaa in chains. Broken and defeated, Lord Holmer was eventually rescued, and mercifully died within a year of his return.

The current Knight Commander of the Order of the Holy Shield is **Katarina Walworth** (LG female human Pal10/KoHS7), Countess of Walworth and cousin of Lord Holmer. As Lady High Marshall of the Great Northern Crusade, she led the armies of Furyondy, Veluna, and the Shield Lands to victory by reclaiming lands lost to Iuz during the Greyhawk Wars. As Knight Commander, Lady Katarina also leads the Council of Lords of the Shield Lands and acts as a unifying voice of reason in the troubled times of the War of Reclamation. To some she is a rash youngster far too eager to forget the traditions of the Shield Lands. To others she is a refreshing change from the arrogant and pig-headed nobles so often associated with the Shield Lands. Regardless, she is immensely popular with the common folk of the nation as well as its allies, and has so far led the Order and the Shield Lands to unexpected success against the Old One.

Franz Torkeep

Lemanda Iormad

Knight Bannerette Incosee of the Bronze Band (NG male human Ftr8/Rgr3/Rog2/KoHS3) is Lady Katarina's right hand in the War of Reclamation and second in command of the Order of the Holy Shield. Incosee and his Bronze Band (a group of primarily Flan-blooded Shield Knights) act as trusted eyes and ears for the Knight Commander, performing a great many tasks for which only the finest and most loyal knights will do. Incosee is a grim pureblood Flan warrior known for his bluntness, practicality, and honesty. He has little patience for the intricacies of politics, preferring instead to do what he has sworn a blood oath to do—fight and die if necessary for the Shield Lands.

Knight Bannerette Franz Torkeep (LG male human Ftr10/KoHS9) is the Earl of Torkeep and a well known and respected member of the Council of Lords. Often a bit rash, Lord Torkeep is not one to sit idly by while others suffer or allow important deeds to go undone. Often outspoken, he says what is on his mind no matter the results, a trait that invariably leads to wildly varying opinions of the man. Torkeep was part of the group that braved the dungeons of Castle Greyhawk to retrieve the *Crook of Rao*, later used by Canon Hazen of Veluna to banish a great many fiends from the Flanaess. Since that adventure, Torkeep has devoted himself to the War of Reclamation. His ancestral lands were the first beyond Critwall and Bright Sentry to be recovered. The story of the Battle of Torkeep is a tremendously popular tale told by bards across the reclaimed Shield Lands and beyond.

Lemanda Iormad (LG female human Ftr2/Clr7 [Heironeous]/KoHS4) did not begin her service to Heironeous with any intention of joining the Order of the Holy Shield. Foremost in her mind has always been to serve the Archpaladin and improve the lives of others with His teachings. Oblivious to the attention her heroic exploits drew, she came to the attention of several elder Shield Knights following the Greyhawk Wars, when she traveled the Flanaess gathering support for the refugees and early reclamation efforts. Shortly before the Great Northern Crusade began, no fewer than four Shield Knights submitted her name to the knight commander. With such impressive backing, Lemanda of Heironeous was quickly ushered into the Order's ranks. This came as a complete surprise to the young woman, who briefly considered refusing the honor until she learned that her duties to Heironeous and the Shield Lands would remain largely unchanged. Content that she could continue to serve as she felt was her duty, she accepted. During the tumultuous years that followed, she continued to rise quickly and was eventually placed in command of the Northern Border Forts at Gensal as Knight Bannerette Lemanda of Heironeous.

After the fall of the Shield Lands to the Old One, **Lady** Valderesse Sharn, **Sir Artur Jakartai** (LG male human Ftr11/KoHS3), and four other Shield Knights retreated to Greyhawk's Sanctum of Heironeous to regroup and gather support for the eventual recovery of the Shield Lands. After the Pact of Greyhawk, many believed the Shield Lands had fallen forever, making attempts to gather allies and gold extremely difficult for the refugee knights. With few options, the Shield Knights under Valderesse's command were forced to act as mercenaries across the Flanaess. When the Great Northern Crusade began, Valderesse, Artur, and their fellow knights flocked to Lady Katarina's banner, bringing with them the meager resources they had managed to gather. During the fighting Lady Valderesse was killed by a priest of Iuz at Crockport. Having been in love with Valderesse for years, Sir Artur was devastated by the loss of his comrade and driven mad for a time.

Though many now believe the madness was caused by the same priest of Iuz who slew Valderesse, Sir Artur still burnt many of his bridges with the Order of the Holy Shield and Council of Lords during that time. The grief-stricken knight blamed the Council of Lords, particularly Lord Holmer, for their handling of Iuz's invasion and ultimately Valderesse's death. Sir Artur was eventually cured of his madness, but refused to return to the Order of the Holy Shield and still harbors resentment toward many of the old guard Shield Lands nobles. Several years later he accepted lordship of the County

of Crystalreach in Furyondy from King Belvor IV, where he remains today. Lady Valderesse was the sister of Lord Valdaine Sharn, former Earl of Bright Sentry and Scragholm Isle. Had she survived the Great Northern Crusade, she, rather than Natan Enerick (her brother's brother-in-law and a well-known follower of Pholtus), would have become regent for young Simen Sharn.

Sir Janszen Reyneld (LG male human Pal8 [Heironeous]/KoHS5) is one of two Shield Knights who remained behind enemy lines in Ringland after the invasion cut the town off from all possible escape routes. Though believed lost along with all of the inhabitants of Ringland, Sir Janszen was recently discovered alive and still living in Ringland along with the other stalwart survivors of that town. As firstborn of Earl Irrien Reyneld, Sir Janszen inherited his father's titles, lands, and position on the Council of Lords when Earl Irrien Reyneld died defending the townsfolk of Reyneld during their retreat to Furyondy. Sir Janszen has yet to claim his rights, deciding instead to remain in Ringland and continue protecting its people until they are safe from Iuz.

Artur Jakartai

Along with Sir Janszen Reyneld, **Sir Harmenn Deleven** (CG male human Rgr8/KoHS3) remained in Ringland to defend the town after Iuz's invasion. Unlike most Shield Knights, Sir Harmenn's background reflects the life of a woodsman rather than a typical knightly squire. Although equally determined to defend the people of Ringland, Sir Harmenn disagreed with Sir Janszen on how best to accomplish that. Sir Harmenn favored making an attempt to reach friendly lands, whereas Sir Janszen considered any attempt to leave Ringland sheer folly. In the end, Sir Harmenn and a small group of followers of Rao left Ringland, hoping to reach Furyondy. None of them were ever heard from again and their fate is currently a mystery.

New Prestige Class: Knight of Holy Shielding

The Knights of Holy Shielding are an order of knights residing in the Restored Holy Realm of the Faithful of the Shield Lands devoted to the Shield Lands' War of Reclamation. They represent the ideals of their patron god Heironeous, seeking to uphold goodness, law, justice and valor and act as shining examples to their fellow countrymen. As warriors of the Shield Lands, they serve as the core of the Holy Realm's armies and fight to defend their homeland from evil.

More important than appearances, actions convey the sincerity of a Shield Knight's vows. Chivalry, honor, justice, and valor are more than just words. They form the code on which Shield Knights base their beliefs, actions, and faith. Failure to live up to the code of the Order is unthinkable to a Shield Knight.

Shield Knights have an important duty to the Shield Lands, and upon joining the Order must sacrifice a portion of freedom to serve. As a result, a Shield Knight should never deny an honorable request for aid from a noble of the Shield Lands or a fellow Shield Knight. It is considered dishonorable to request payment for any aid provided.

As sworn protectors of the Shield Lands, Shield Knights must devote a great deal of time to their duties. While doing so, they are encouraged to travel the Shield Lands performing good deeds and protecting the people, but are generally free to do as they please unless under orders from their liege lord, a superior in the Order of the Holy Shield, or the Council of Lords.

Most Knights of Holy Shielding are fighters, clerics, or paladins, but a few remarkable rangers have been honored with membership in the past. Barbarians, bards, druids, and rogues usually lack the devotion to law and justice that Knights of Holy Shielding hold sacred, and monks, wizards, and sorcerers are usually too encumbered by the heavy armor and weapons typically employed by the Order. Humans are by far the most common Knights of Holy Shielding, but an occasional dwarf, elf, half-elf, or even halfling has gained membership through loyal and exceptional service to the Shield Lands and Heironeous.

NPC Shield Knights are usually noble lords of the Shield Lands, crusading knights, or elite mounted soldiers in the service of the Shield Lands army. As symbols of honor, Knights of Holy Shielding always make their presence known to help bolster the morale of the common soldier and intimidate the cowardly minions of evil.

Entry Requirements: Must be lawful good, lawful neutral, or neutral good; base attack bonus +6; Diplomacy 2 ranks, Knowledge (local) 4 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 2 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 2 ranks, Ride 9 ranks; Cleave, Great Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battle axe, heavy lance, or longsword).

Additionally, a Shield Knight must gain the sponsorship of a current Knight of Holy Shielding and complete a dangerous quest in the service of the Shield Lands. In most cases, sponsorship is something a prospective knight is offered, as few truly deserving individuals presume to ask for such support.

Skills (2 + Int per level): Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Heal, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Knowledge (religion), Ride, Sense Motive.

Holy Realm Hero (Ex): At 1st level, your reputation as a protector of the people germinates. This grants you a +1 morale bonus on the following skill checks: Diplomacy, Gather

Information, and Intimidate. The bonus increases by +1 each odd-numbered Knight of Holy Shielding level you gain. When you use one of these skills against a citizen of the Shield Lands, the bonus is doubled. As a general rule, a citizen of the Shield Lands starts any encounter with a Knight of Holy Shielding with a friendly attitude. Many knights use this ability to befriend locals and secure hospitality.

Spit on the Old One (Su): A 1st level, a Knight of Holy Shielding's zeal fills him with holy wrath against the minions of Iuz the Old. He gains a +2 bonus on Intimidate, Listen, Sense Motive, and Spot checks when using these skills against agents of Iuz (including all chaotic evil outsiders). Likewise, he gets a +2 bonus on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and Will saves against such creatures.

At 5th level, these bonuses increase to +4. At 9th level, the bonuses increase to +6.

Although this ability is similar to the ranger's favored enemy ability (and should be treated as a favored enemy ability for the purposes of qualifying for other prestige classes or feats), the bonuses granted by this ability do not stack with similar bonuses granted from favored enemy.

Prior to the Greyhawk Wars, this ability was called "Death to the Hierarchs," with various names before that as the order's primary enemy changed over the years. As time wears on, the primary enemy shall doubtless change again, at which time the name changes and the targets to which the bonuses apply change as well.

Armor of the Invincible (Su): At 2nd level, a Knight of Holy Shielding gains the ability to infuse his armor or clothing once a day with divinity as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. This duplicates the effects of *magic vestment* at a caster level equal to twice his Knight of Holy Shielding level.

Divine Advancement: At every other level starting at 2nd level, a Knight of Holy Shielding may select to advance either his divine spellcasting abilities or his bonded mount. At each level the player must choose which of the two types of advancements he wishes to receive.

Bonded Mount: You may add one to your effective paladin level for purposes of determining the abilities of a special mount. If you don't have any paladin levels, you can gain the special mount ability at 10th level if you apply this ability each time, since by this point your effective paladin level is 5th.

Knight of Holy Shielding **Hit Die: d10**

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Holy Realm Hero +1, Spit on the Old One +2
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Armor of the Invincible, Divine Advancement
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Aura of Courage, Holy Realm Hero +2
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Divine Advancement, Righteous Advance
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Holy Realm Hero +3, Spit on the Old One +4
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Divine Advancement, Strength of the Shield Lands
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Holy Realm Hero +4, Ruinous Advance
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Divine Advancement, Shield of the Invincible
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Holy Realm Hero +5, Spit on the Old One +6
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Divine Advancement, Words of Valor

The Code of Knighthood

We are the shield bearers of Heironeous.
Honor is our conscience.
Valor is our blood.
Justice is our soul.
We uphold the law.
And protect what is right.
We offer all that we are
in the service of the Shield Lands
For as long as we draw breath!

Spells per day: You continue to train in divine magic. You gain new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if you had also gained a level in a divine spellcasting class you belonged to before you added this prestige class. You do not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If you have more than one divine spellcasting class, you must decide which class to assign this ability for the purpose of determining spells per day.

Aura of Courage (Su): Beginning at 4th level, a Knight of Holy Shielding is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the knight gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. If the Knight already has this ability from another class, the radius of the morale bonus gained by allies increases by +10 feet.

Righteous Advance (Ex): At 4th level, a Knight of Holy Shielding may take a five-foot move between bonus attacks gained from the Cleave or Great Cleave feats. The attacking Shield Knight may take a total number of five-foot moves between Cleave attacks equal to his Dexterity modifier per round. This ability may be used both on foot and mounted, but a successful Ride check (DC 20) is required when mounted; a failed check ends the Righteous Advance for that round. These five-foot moves are part of the knight's total movement for the round; the total distance the Knight can move during a righteous advance cannot exceed his current speed, including any moves the knight made earlier in the round. For example, a knight with a speed of 20 feet moves 10 feet to close with a clot of goblins. He drops one, moves five more feet and drops a second goblin, then moves five more feet and drops a third goblin. Although his Dexterity modifier is +4, he cannot make any more five-foot moves since he has moved a total of 20 feet in the round.

Taking a five-foot move in this manner provokes attacks of opportunity normally; it is not the same as a 5-foot step. Likewise, you cannot take a 5-foot step in a round in which you use righteous advance, since righteous advance is considered moving.

Strength of the Shield Lands (Su): At 6th level, a Knight of Holy Shielding gains the ability to infuse his body once a day with holy power. This is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, and duplicates the effects of *divine power* at a caster level equal to twice his Knight of Holy Shielding level.

Ruinous Advance (Ex): At 7th level, a Knight of Holy Shielding gains an insight bonus equal to his Charisma bonus (minimum of +1) on attack rolls, melee weapon damage rolls, and to Armor Class against attacks of opportunity when he uses his righteous advance ability.

Shield of the Invincible (Su): At 10th level, a Knight of Holy Shielding gains the supernatural ability to create a *shield of law* once per day as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The *shield of law* functions at a caster level equal to twice the knight's class level.

Words of Valor (Su): At 8th level, a Knight of Holy Shielding can utter the words of valor once per day as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Uttering the words of valor duplicates the effect of *holy word* cast at caster level 20.

Paladin Knights

Knights of Holy Shielding may multiclass freely as paladins.

Disadvantages of Knighthood

As symbols of good, Shield Knights earn the enmity of the forces of evil. Most servants of evil see Shield Knights as dangerous threats and often single them out for destruction during combat or even for inadvertently crossing their paths. This is particularly true of followers of Iuz and Hextor, who often go to great lengths to kill or dishonor Knights of Holy Shielding.

As a long-established order, the Knights of Holy Shielding have gained their share of enemies and allies. For the most part, people know Shield Knights to be honorable and trustworthy and react accordingly. However, some groups, such as the Knights of the Hart, have developed a dislike for the Shield Knights. Hart Knights feel the Knights of Holy Shielding failed in their duty to protect the Shield Lands by allowing the nation to fall first to the Horned Society and then to Iuz. As such, Hart Knights view Shield Knights with some disdain and treat them accordingly.

Advantages of Knighthood

Not everything about being a Shield Knight comes with a price. As servants of the Shield Lands, Shield Knights can expect a few benefits as they travel. Within the Shield Lands, Knights of Holy Shielding are entitled to the hospitality of nobles, religious sanctuaries of Heironeous, and other Shield Knights. This hospitality extends to a knight's mount, but other companions must find their own accommodations. Most hosts offer a knight's companions the hospitality (if only by opening their stables) in a show of generosity. Shield Knights are expected to provide the same hospitality in turn. It is considered rude to make outrageous demands on a host or expect his hospitality to continue indefinitely. Also, demanding hospitality from common folk without providing reasonable compensation to them is considered dishonorable.

As protectors of the land, it falls to some Shield Knights to offer their service as leaders. When this opportunity presents itself, a sworn vassal of one of the great noble families may earn a "knight's fee" in return for years of exceptional service. The "fee" usually takes the form of a working manor large enough to support the knight and his followers in an appropriate manner. It becomes a knight's duty to oversee the workings of his land and protect the people who reside there. Shield Knights see this as the greatest reward they can earn and take their responsibilities very seriously. Extremely high-level and well-respected Shield Knights may eventually earn the right to command a keep or castle protecting a large village or town. ●

Cartography by Christopher West